

# ***William B. Umstead State Park General Management Plan***



**North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources**

**Division of Parks and Recreation**

**Piedmont Region**

**November 2017**



## I. MISSION AND PURPOSE

### MISSION STATEMENT:

The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation exists to inspire all its citizens and visitors through conservation, recreation and education.

**Conservation:** To conserve and protect representative examples of North Carolina's natural beauty, ecological features, recreational and cultural resources within the state parks system; **Recreation:** To provide and promote safe, healthy and enjoyable outdoor recreational opportunities throughout the state; and **Education:** To provide educational opportunities that promote stewardship of the state's natural and cultural heritage.

**OUR PURPOSE:** The 1987 State Parks Act defines the purposes of the state parks system. It establishes that: The State of North Carolina offers unique archaeological, geologic, biologic, scenic and recreational resources. These resources are part of the heritage of the people of this State. The heritage of a people should be preserved and managed by those people for their use and for the use of their visitors and descendants.

### PURPOSE:

William B. Umstead State Park was established in 1943 when it was deeded to the State of North Carolina by the federal government. Deed restrictions specify that the park must serve "public park, recreation, and conservation purposes" or revert to federal ownership. A federal land reclamation demonstration project that portrayed the potential of using sub marginal farmland for recreation and conservation established the park. William B. Umstead State Park has returned to a predominantly natural condition since its establishment. The park enhances local air and water quality, protects an extensive undeveloped area in a rapidly growing region, and offers an urban population the opportunity to experience an extensive natural setting. This park is a typical example of successful reclamation of sub marginal farmland and increasing citizen appreciation for the value of open space and natural landscapes. Several themes and trends identified in the N.C. State Parks Systemwide Plan are protected including: hiking trails, equestrian trails, multi-use trails, biking, canoeing, and tent and trailer camping.

William B. Umstead State Park has significant scenic resources that provide views of the largest natural landscape in the Research Triangle area. Undeveloped lakefronts at Big, Sycamore, and Reedy Creek Lakes, forest communities, and creeks provide view shed protection within an urban area. Significant recreation resources include: an extensive multiple-use trail system, three constructed lakes suitable for a variety of water-based recreation activities, and areas with potential for the development of facilities for visitors. Recreational development and activities must be compatible with protection of the resources of the park. The resources and proximity to urban populations combine to enhance cultural and environmental education possibilities.



William B. Umstead State Park serves to protect valuable biologic, recreational, cultural, scenic and geological resources. The mission for the Division of Parks and Recreation is to preserve resources and providing park experiences that promote pride in and understanding of natural heritage of North Carolina.

## II. HISTORY

Long before the first settlers, the area now known as William B. Umstead State Park was an untamed land. American bison, elk, bobcats and wolves roamed forests of oak, hickory and beech. Native Americans later inhabited the land and routes for trade were developed nearby. Such pathways included the Oconeechee trail to the north and the Pee Dee trail to the south. In 1774, land grants opened the area for settlement.

Forests were cleared as agricultural interests developed. While early farming efforts were successful, poor cultivation practices and one-crop production led to depletion and erosion of the soil. During the Depression, farmers made unsuccessful attempts to grow cotton in worn-out soil around Crabtree Creek.

In 1934, under the Resettlement Administration, federal and state agencies united to buy 5,000 acres of this sub marginal land to develop a recreation area. The Civilian Conservation Corps, as well as the Works Progress Administration, helped construct the site while providing much needed jobs. Four camp areas, along with day-use and picnic facilities were constructed and the park opened to the public in 1937.

The State of North Carolina purchased this area, known as *Crabtree Creek Recreation Area*, for \$1, and more facilities were built as the General Assembly made the first state parks division appropriation in the 1940's. In 1950, more than 1,000 acres of the park was established as a separate park for African-Americans. This area was named *Reedy Creek State Park*. Crabtree Creek Recreation Area was renamed a few years later after former Governor William Bradley Umstead because of his conservation efforts. In 1966, the Crabtree Creek and Reedy Creek areas were united under the same name, and William B. Umstead State Park was open to everyone.

## III. THEMES AND INVENTORY

### Themes

The significant archeological, geologic, scenic, recreational and biological resources of North Carolina should be represented in the State Park system. These resources, as cited in the State Parks Act, are divided into sub-categories called resource "themes". There have been 108 themes identified that should be protected to preserve representative examples of unique resources. For this General Management Plan, only themes that are of high significance to William B. Umstead State Park are shown.

### **William B. Umstead State Park Theme Table**

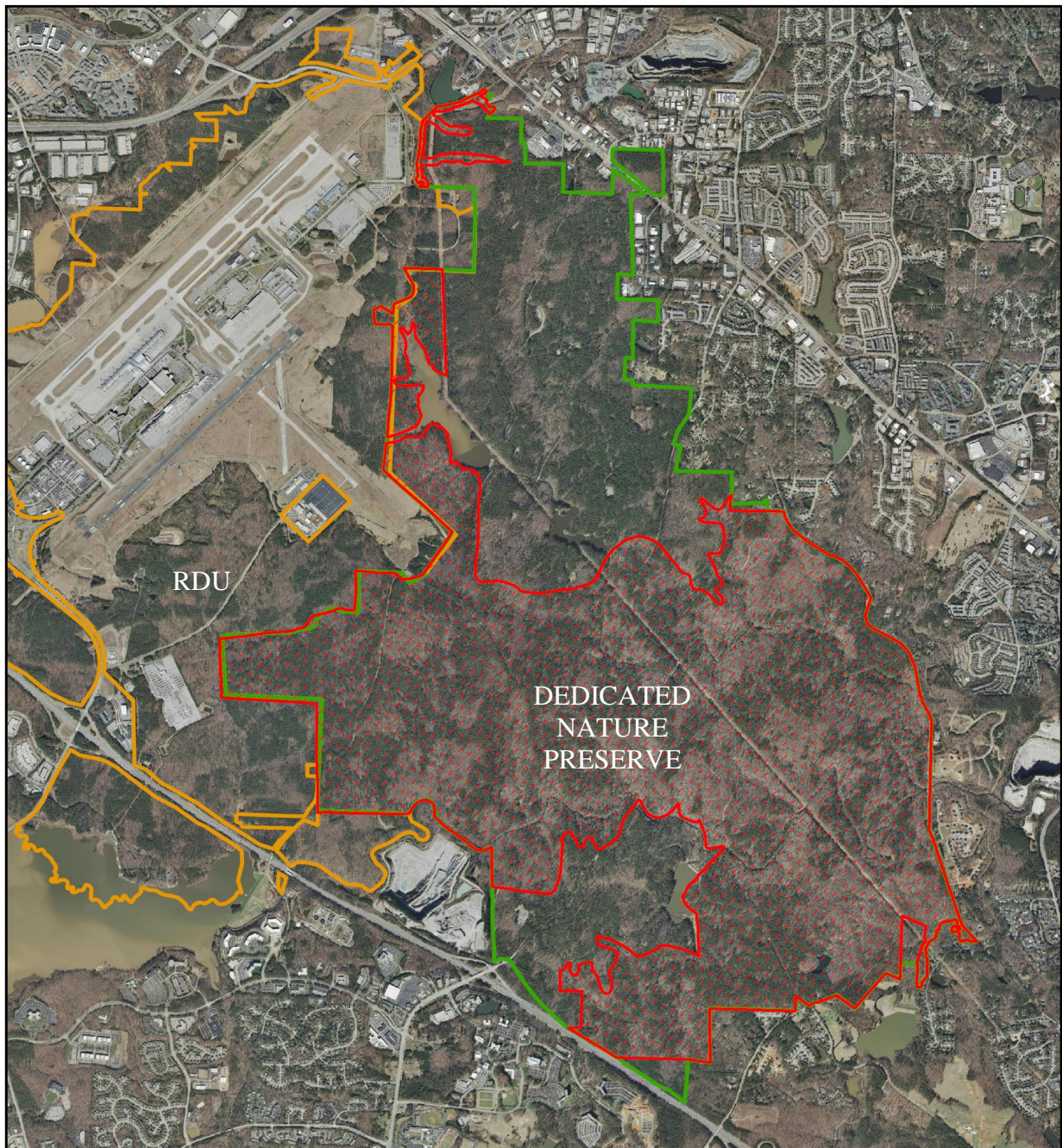


Theme Type	Theme	Umstead Park Significance	State Parks System Representation
Archeological/Historic	Cemetery	High	Adequate
Archeological/Historic	Mills	High	Adequate
Archeological/Historic	Public Works	High	Adequate
Archeological/Historic	Recreation	High	Adequate
Archeological/Historic	Rural-Domestic	High	Adequate
Archeological/Historic	Transportation	High	Moderate
Archeological/Prehistoric	Campsite/Activity Area	High	Adequate
Archeological/Standing Structure	Public Works	High	Adequate
Archeological/Standing Structure	Recreation	High	Adequate
Archeological/Standing Structure	Rural-Domestic	High	Adequate
Biological	Piedmont and Coastal Plain Mesic Forests	High	Adequate
Biological	Piedmont and Coastal Plain Oak Forests	High	Adequate
Biological	Piedmont and Mountain Floodplains	High	Moderate
Geological	Dissected Uplands	High	Adequate
Geological	Faults, Joints, and Related Features	High	Adequate
Geological	Folds and Related Features	High	Adequate
Geological	Gorges, Rapids, Waterfalls	High	Adequate
Geological	Intrusions	High	Adequate
Geological	Metamorphic Features	High	Adequate
Scenic	Forests	High	Moderate
Scenic	Meadows/Grasslands	High	Little
Scenic	Reservoirs/Lakes	High	Adequate
Scenic	Rivers	High	Little
Scenic	Scenic Vistas	High	Moderate


\*See the Systemwide Plan for references to Theme and inventory terms. Themes have both actual and “potential” future needs to be at a park.



# DEDICATED NATURE PRESERVE



## Legend

-  Dedicated Nature Preserve
-  RDU Parcel Boundary
-  State Parks Unit

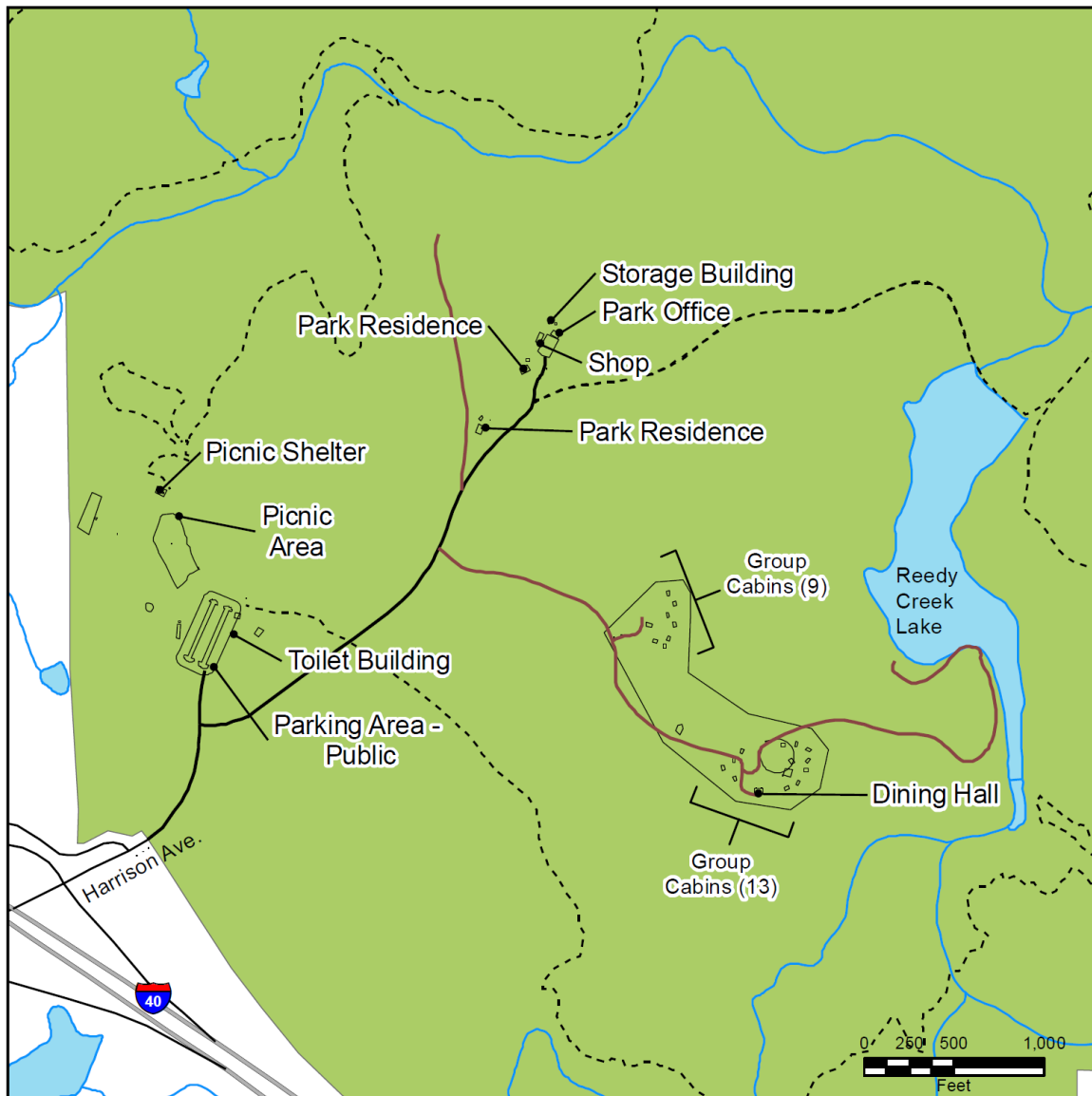
Dedicated Nature Preserve Boundaries  
William B. Umstead State Park







## FACILITIES INVENTORY- REEDY CREEK ENTRANCE



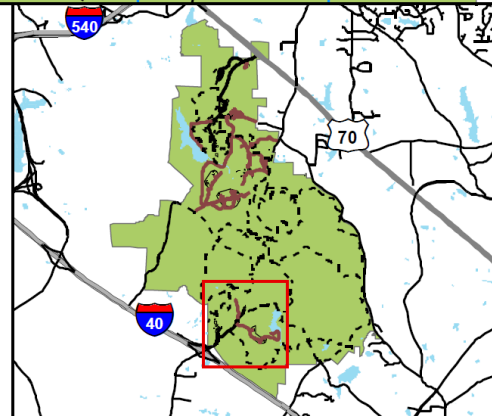
### William B. Umstead State Park Facilities Inventory

Reedy Creek Entrance

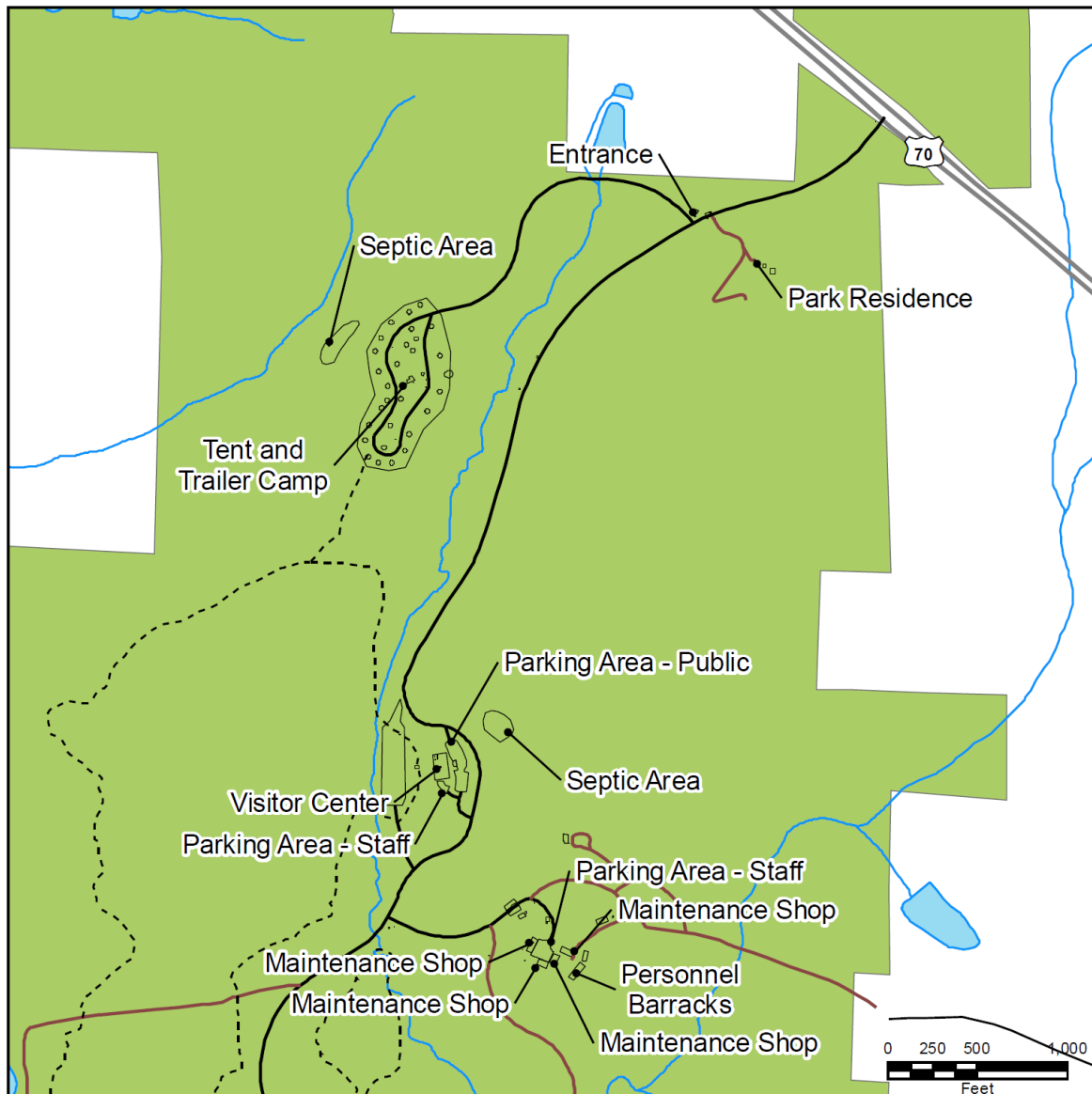
March 2017



- Existing Trail
- Road - Paved
- Road - Unpaved
- Existing Facilities
- State Parks Unit



# FACILITIES INVENTORY - CRABTREE CREEK AREA

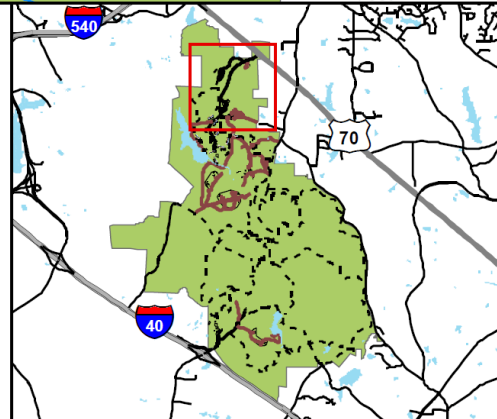


## William B. Umstead State Park Facilities Inventory

Crabtree Creek Area  
March 2017

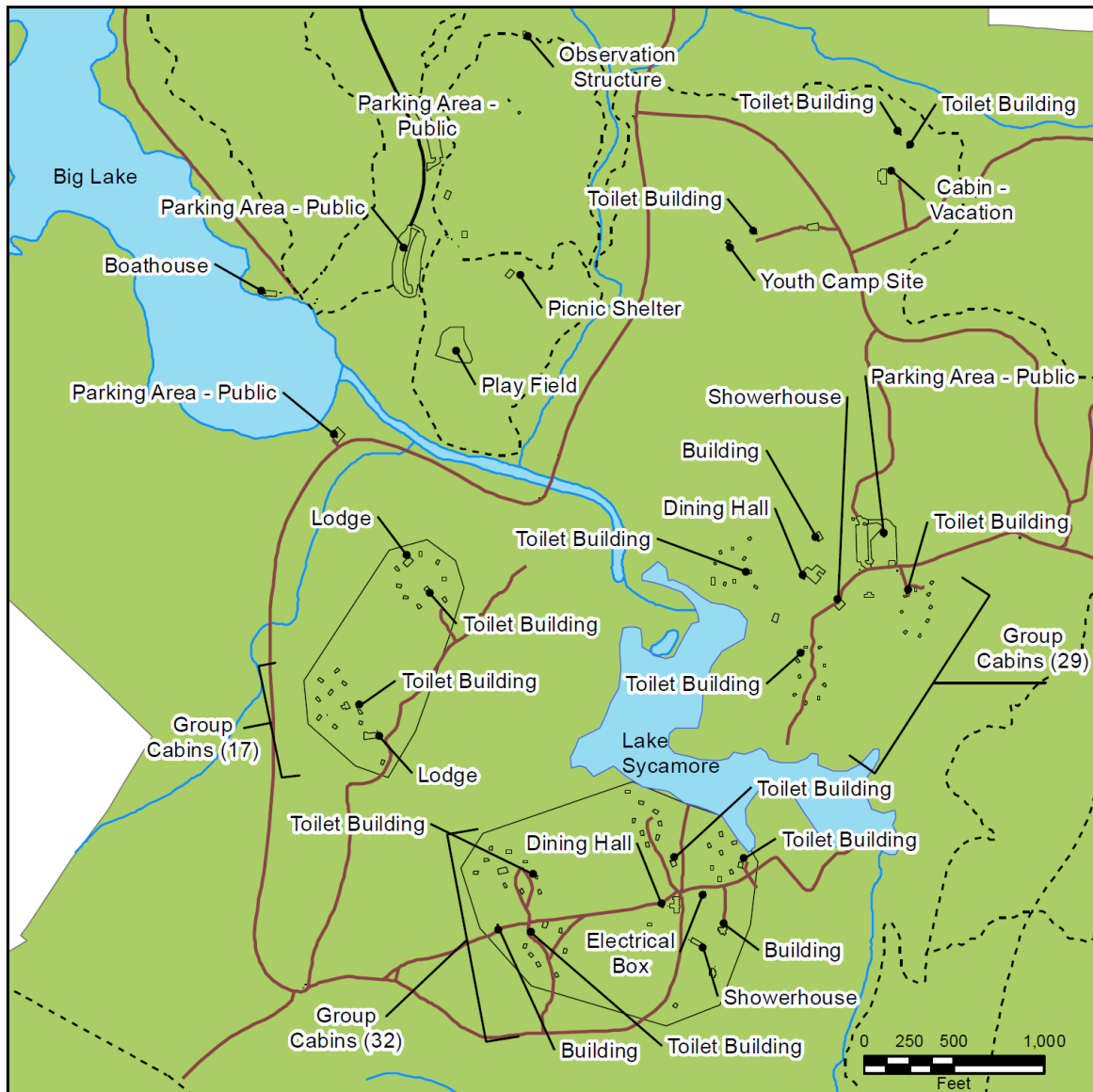


- Existing Trail
- Road - Paved
- Road - Unpaved
- Existing Facilities
- State Parks Unit





## FACILITY INVENTORY – BIG LAKE AREA



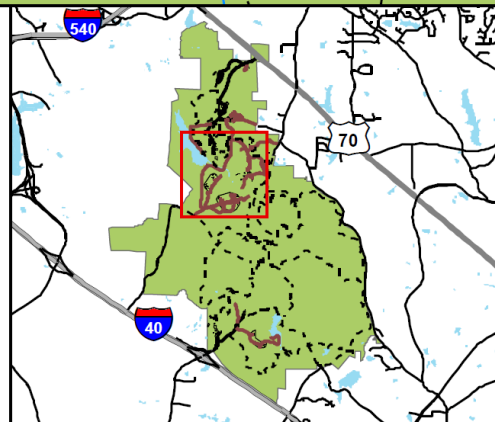
### William B. Umstead State Park Facilities Inventory

Big Lake Area

March 2017



- Existing Trail
- Road - Paved
- Road - Unpaved
- Existing Facilities
- State Parks Unit





## TRAIL INVENTORY

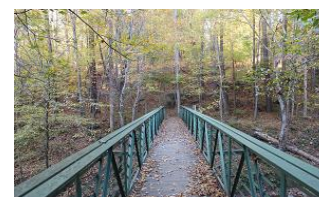
Trail Inventory	Hiking	Bike	Equestrian	Multi-Use
Campground Spur Trail	0.40			
Cedar Ridge Trail (MUT)	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52
Company Mill Trail	5.80			
Company Mill Spur	0.20			
Graylyn Trail (MUT)	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62
Inspiration Trail	0.74			
Loblolly Trail	2.70			
North Turkey Creek Trail (MUT)	2.60	2.60	2.60	2.60
Oak Rock Trail	0.60			
Pott's Branch Trail	1.37			
Reedy Creek Lake Trail (MUT)	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66
Reedy Creek MUT Trail	3.70	3.70	3.70	3.70
Sal's Branch Trail	2.80			
South Turkey Creek Trail (MUT)	2.64	2.64	2.64	2.64
Sycamore Trail	7.60			
<b>Umstead SP Totals (miles)</b>	<b>34.95</b>	<b>12.74</b>	<b>12.74</b>	<b>12.74</b>

### **HIKING:**

Campground Spur Trail: This trail is a 0.40-mile-long loop trail that starts at south end of the Campground area near the Crabtree Creek Entrance and intersects with the Sal's Branch Loop Trail.

Cedar Ridge Trail (MUT): This trail is a 1.52-mile multi-use Trail which provides a connection from Reedy Creek MUT to the Ebenezer Church Road Bridge gate.

Company Mill Trail: This trail is a 5.80-mile-long loop that begins with the one mile spur connecting Reedy Creek parking lot to Crabtree Creek and the site of Company Mill. After crossing the bridge, the spur connects to the loop. Scenic areas along the trail include the banks of Crabtree and Sycamore Creeks and a millstone.



Company Mill Trail

Company Mill Spur: This trail is a 0.20-mile spur connector that connects Reedy Creek MUT to Sycamore Trail.

Graylyn Trail (MUT): This is a 1.62-mile multi-use trail that starts at the Graylyn Gate off Ebenezer Church Road, and goes south to the Reedy Creek MUT.



**Inspiration Trail:** This is a 0.74-mile short loop trail that connects to Company Mill Trail. A section of the trail follows a small stream to the south along Crabtree Creek



**Inspiration Trail**

**Loblolly Trail:** This is a 2.70-mile-long trail that begins at Reedy Creek Entrance parking lot. This out and back trail crosses Reedy Creek and continues to the park boundary, then connects to *Schenck Forest* located to the south. Options for loop system are available at intersections with the Reedy Creek MUT and South Turkey Creek MUT.

**North Turkey Creek Trail (MUT):** This 2.60-mile trail starts at the Graylyn multi use trail and goes east, near the Sendero Gate along Ebenezer Church Road. The trail ends at the Trenton Road Gate off Reedy Creek Road. The *Crabtree Creek Trail*, managed by City of Raleigh, goes from Sendero Gate to the east.

**Oak Rock Trail:** This is a 0.60-mile trail that begins at the Crabtree Creek picnic area. The trail crosses a small stream, Sal's Branch, at two points along the route. Stonework includes a check dam and a culvert. This trail is the TRACK interpretation/educational trail.



**Oak Rock Trail**

**Pott's Branch Trail:** is a 1.37mile loop trail begins at the Crabtree Creek Picnic area. The short hike meanders along three small streams that flows into Crabtree Creek. A section of the trail is routed through the picnic area offering easy access.

**Reedy Creek Lake Trail (MUT):** This is a 0.66 mile multi use trail which begins on the backside of the maintenance area on Reedy Creek side and goes north along the Reedy Creek Lake to the Reedy Creek MUT.

**Reedy Creek Trail (MUT):** This is a 3.70-mile multi use trail that begins at the Old Reedy Creek Road Gate, runs north, then east to Reedy Creek Lake area, then south to Trenton Road Gate.

*Black Creek Greenway*, managed by Town of Cary, begins at the Bond Park Metro Park Trailhead, then a smaller trailhead parking lot is located near Lake Crabtree off Old Reedy Creek Road, then then connects into Reedy Creek Trail (MUT).

*Reedy Creek Trail*, managed by City of Raleigh, follows Reedy Creek Road from Umstead State Park to the North Carolina Museum of Art and Meredith College Campus.

**Sal's Branch Trail:** This 2.80-mile loop trail has a trailhead located directly behind the Visitor Center on the Glenwood Avenue Entrance. The hiking trail normally takes 1 hour or less. There is a man- made lake about halfway through the hike. From this trail, southwest section hikers can take in views of Big Lake.



**South Turkey Creek Trail (MUT):** This 2.64-mile multi use trail starts at Ebenezer Church Road Bridge Gate and goes south to the Trenton Road Gate. *Richland Creek Trail*, managed by City of Raleigh, continues to the PNC Arena through Schenck Forest.

**Sycamore Trail:** This trail is a 7.60-mile-long and the trail head is located at the end of Umstead Parkway. From there, a spur runs parallel to Sycamore Road and connects to the loop. Access is also available from the multi-use trail parking lot at the end of Sycamore Road. The trail follows Sycamore Creek for much of the loop.



**Sycamore Trail**

## **EQUESTRIAN TRAILS**

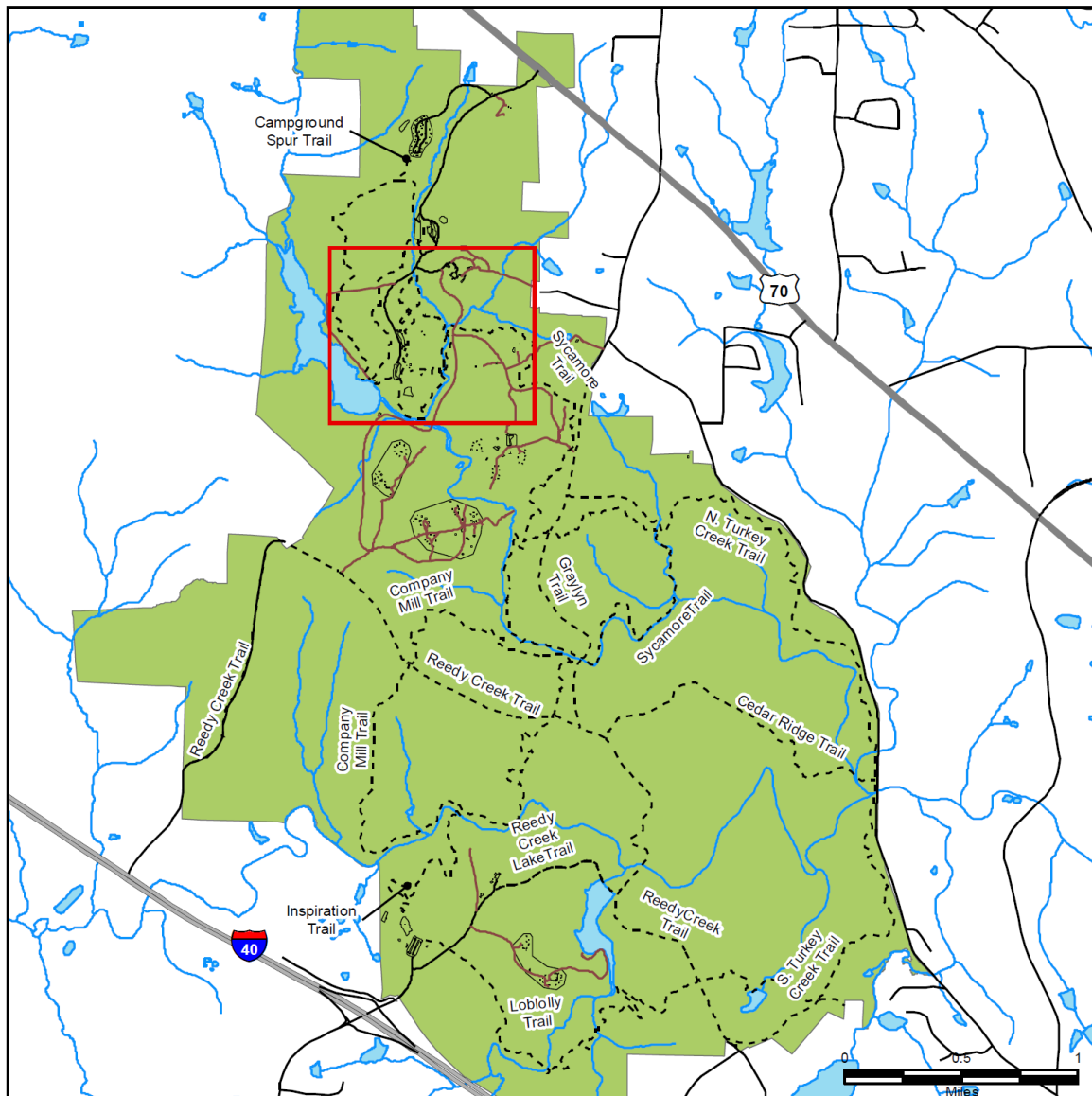
**Equestrian Trails:** 12.72 miles of bridle trails traverse some of the most scenic parts of the park. Horses are restricted to the multi-use trails and are not permitted in other areas of the park, including hiking trails. Popular equestrian trails include: Reedy Creek MUT, and South Turkey Creek MUT.



**Equestrian Trails**



## TRAIL INVENTORY



### William B. Umstead State Park Trail Inventory

March 2017



- Existing Trail
- Road - Paved
- Road - Unpaved
- Existing Facilities
- State Parks Unit





## IV. PLANNING



**Extensive Trail system**



**Sendero Access Area**



**Rain Garden**



**Depression Era Cabins**





## LAND PROTECTION FOR STATE PARKS

To achieve the highest level of connectivity between park properties already owned by the State of North Carolina, further acquisition of land is expected to take place. Additional land will ensure the maximum protection of natural resources, scenic preservation, outdoor recreation and public access. Each park has several tracts of land that have been distinguished as a future need or a critical need for the park. The following map shows Land Acquisition needs for William B. Umstead State Park.



**Entrance road from Harrison Avenue  
with limited parking**



**Internal Park Roads**



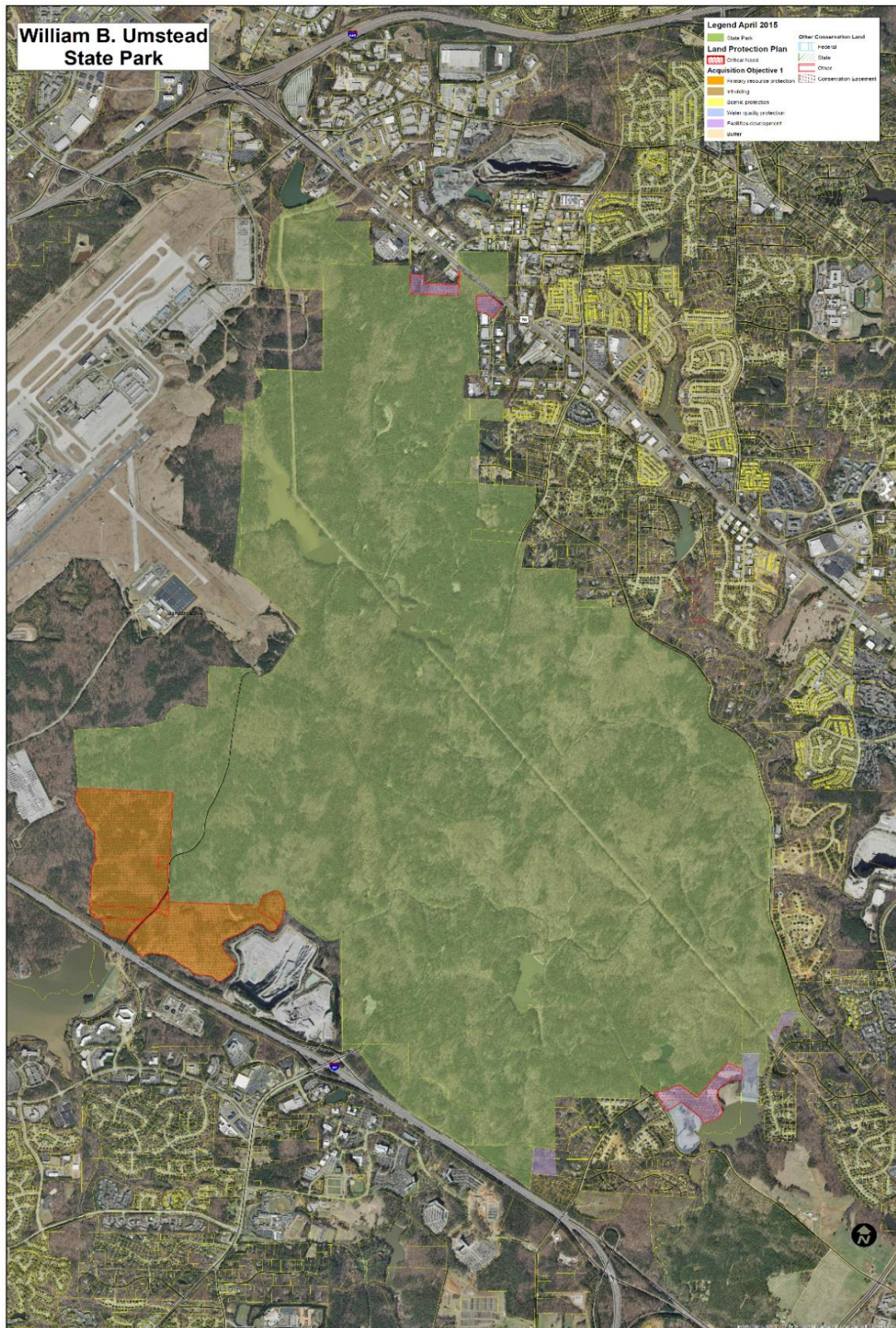
**Trenton Road access**



**Facilities and watershed protection**



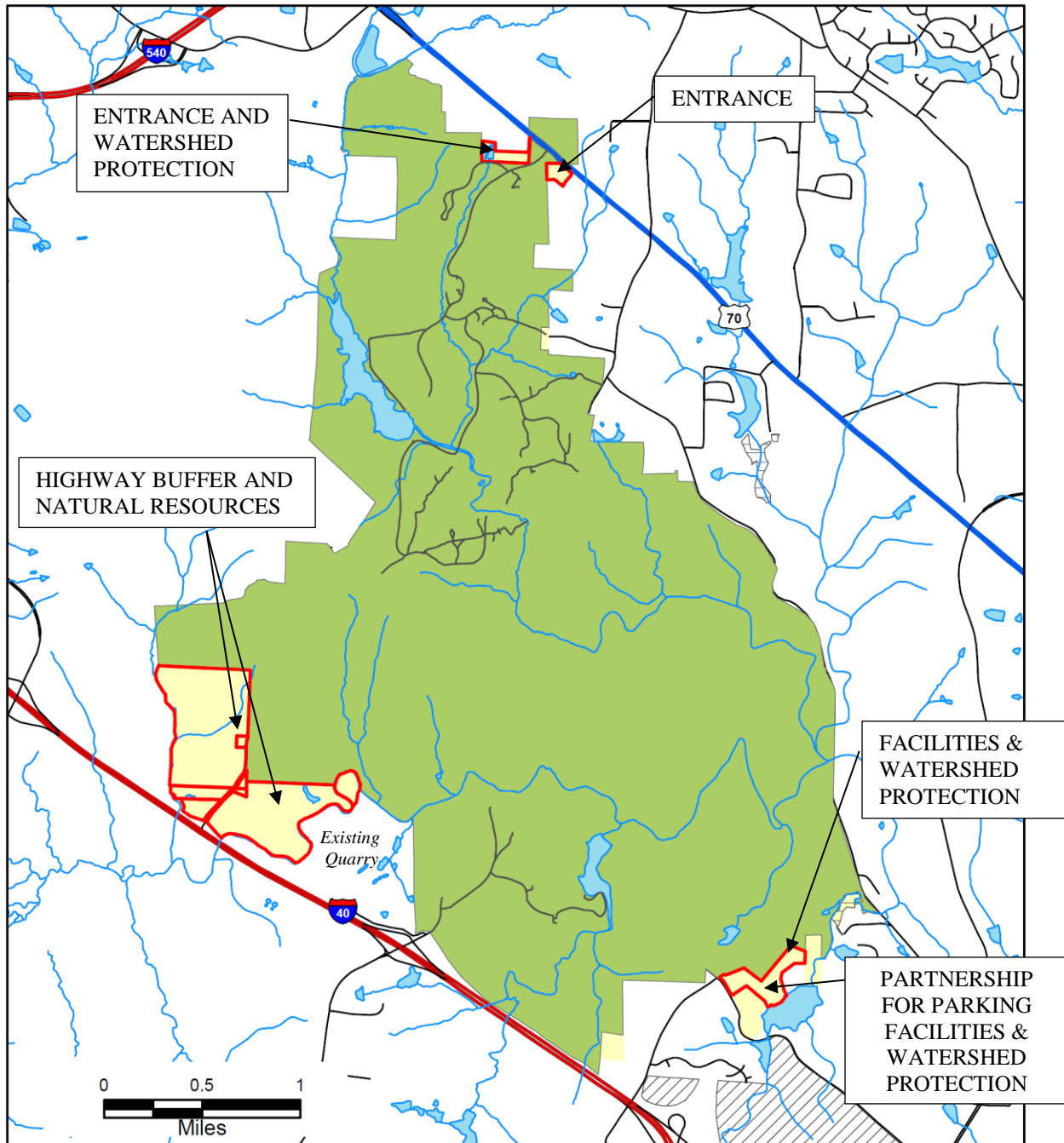
# LAND PROTECTION PLAN







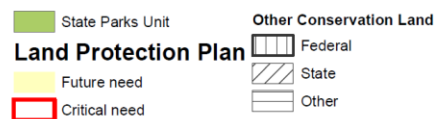
## LAND PROTECTION PLAN - CRITICAL ACRES



William B. Umstead SP



January 2016







## PROJECT LIST

Project	Project Title	Conceptual Cost
1	Contact Station /Education Building	\$ 1,790,470
2	Convert Sycamore Group Camp to Day-Use Area	2,344,003
3	Multi Use Trail Improvements	117,150
4	Crabtree Creek Maintenance Area Improvements	962,714
5	Lake Spillway Improvements	577,500
6	Tent and Trailer Campground Improvements	971,046
7	Boathouse Renovations	545,510
8	Group Camp Renovation – Crabtree Access	1,192,125
9	Trail Renovations	1,933,113
10	Building Renovations	755,590
11	Renovate Lapihio Group Camp	1,895,970
12	Maple Hill Lodge Group Use Area	135,850
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 13,221,041</b>

*\*\* Planning estimated project cost does not include contingencies, design fee, nor escalation.*

### 1. Contact Station /Education Building

Convert camp Whispering Pines to a day use area with a Contact Station/ Education facility, picnic sites and three (3) picnic shelters. Adequate parking will accommodate increased day use demands, and multi –use trail access and connectivity. This location is located near a dedicated nature preserve, however the facility will not impact the natural resource.

### 2. Convert Sycamore Group Camp to Day-Use Area

This project proposes to convert the old Sycamore Group Camp in the Crabtree Creek section of the park to a day-use area. Camp Sycamore area is currently being used as a trailhead by hikers, bikers, equestrians, and individuals fishing in Sycamore Lake. A Civilian Conservation Corps-era restroom building is used by the public, and vehicles park in a parking area separated for equestrian users and hikers. Visitors access the site from the U.S. Route 70 entrance along a paved park road which follows a one mile long gravel road.

Scope of work includes: shower house, parking areas, access road, turn around area. The renovated depression -era structures will provide facilities for day use visitors and day campers. This popular visitor activity, along with a proposed shower house facilities will serve trail users, campers and day use users.



Gates, informational displays, trail connectors, and other related infrastructure such as expansion of the septic service and underground electrical power are also included. Civilian Conservation Corps-era buildings have been restored and stabilized.

Expansion of parking capacity, while needed to address normal park visitation and trailhead use, will also provide park for large events up to approximately 400 attendees. Additional and defined parking spaces for horse trailers will be provided. Exhibits and displays will be added to enhance environmental education.



**Camp Sycamore Lodge renovated for overnight use**



**Existing Parking Lot expansion**



**Existing Depression Era Camp Buildings**

### **3. Multi Use Trail Improvements.**

This project will create a section of Multi-use trail connecting the Reedy Creek Parking Area with the Reedy Creek Multi-Use Trail (MUT) by converting a small section of the Loblolly Trail to Multi-use Trail. The section between the Reedy Creek Parking area and Reedy Creek Parkway will be widened and upgraded to a natural surface multi-use trail along with a small section of MUT along Reedy Creek access area. When the Educational Center is constructed at Whispering Pines a MUT connector should be designed and as part of this project.



**Road Crossing**

### **4. Crabtree Creek Maintenance Area Improvements**

This project would make improvements to the existing maintenance area that serves the facilities in the Crabtree Creek section of the park accessed off U.S. Route 70. Scope of work includes: renovations to two maintenance buildings, demolish and construct a new garage, demolish and construct an existing maintenance shop for welding and carpentry. and construction of a proposed four-bay vehicle storage shed.

## 5. **Lake Spillway Improvements**

This project includes improvements to the spillways at the three park lakes: Big Lake, Sycamore Lake and Reedy Creek Lake. The improvements are needed to protect park resources by addressing structural dam integrity (low hazard), undercutting, leakage and other items. Permitting with State of North Carolina and various Wake County agencies will be required.

Reedy Creek Lake has had hydrilla present since 1981. This is a concern for natural resources and best management practices will be used prior to construction.



**Spillway**



**Big Lake**

## 6. **Tent and Trailer Campground Improvements**

Renovation to the existing tent and trailer campground will be needed to provide more camping improvements in the Crabtree Creek urban area. Scope of work includes: demolition of the existing shower house; construction of a shower house, 4 camper cabins, reuse septic field; water line extension; bury underground electrical service; and renovation of the information kiosk. Hose bibs will be scattered throughout the campground area to provide water for shared use.

100 Amp electric service will only be provided to the outside of each cabin, allowing for some small electric items to be supported. The electric improvements will provide park visitors with a wide range of camping alternatives, such as: camper cabins and appeal to a wider range of park visitors.



**Standard Campsite**



**Demolish Existing Shower house**

## 7. **Boathouse Renovations**

This project proposes renovations to the existing boathouse, built in 1962, at Big Lake and to the related adjoining facilities, including the addition of vault toilet, dock replacement of 12 structures, improved pedestrian access and canoe storage facility. The recreational opportunities offered by these facilities are popular with visitors, will create revenue generation, and will improve access to the site located on the northwest section of the park with access off Glenwood Avenue.



**Proposed Vault toilet**

## 8. **Group Camp Renovation – Crabtree access**





This project proposes major renovations to the existing facilities at both Camp A and Camp B of the Crabtree Group Camp, constructed in the late 1930's. Scope of work includes: renovations to existing buildings, trails, and the swim area at Lake Sycamore. The lodge, dining hall, canteen/infirmary, cooks cabin and 16 cabins will be renovated, furnished with bunk beds, and treated for powder post beetles. The dining hall will be upgraded with updated kitchen equipment and furnishings. An existing propane tank will supply heat to the cabins. The group camps are popular and will create revenue generation. The renovations will allow this use to continue in the historical context of the Great Depression-era camp buildings.



**Camp Crabtree Mess Hall**

## **9. Trail Renovations**

Trails throughout the park receive heavy traffic from hikers, bikers and equestrians from Cary and Raleigh and other surrounding urban areas. The project will improve approximately 20 miles of trails, including: Sycamore Trail, Sal's Branch Trail, Loblolly Trail, Inspiration Loop, Company Mill Trail, and Oak Rock Trail. The objective is to bring trails to sustainable trail design practices, and replace several bridges as needed due to flooding conditions.



**Hiking Trail**

## **10. Building Renovations-**

This project addresses all minimum repairs, including general repairs and treatment of facilities for powder post beetles,



**Condition of Structures - 2011**



**Structures after renovations**

necessary to stabilize park buildings that are not covered under other capital improvement projects. Before funding is requested, an updated inventory of buildings and project scope will be completed to determine exact needs. Minimum standards for handicapped access, health, fire, safety and other building codes are not being met, and the cost of needed repairs is beyond the maintenance funds available through the operating budget.



# 11. Renovate Lapihio Group Camp

Camp Lapihio is a popular group camp. This scope of work includes improvements to the Lapihio facilities, constructed in 1939, that will allow existing uses to continue while maintaining the Civilian Conservation Corps-era character of the historical resources. Improvements include: renovations to the various group camp buildings, conversion of three of the cabins for accessible standards, improvements to the swim area at Lake Sycamore; adequate parking expansion and improvements; general grading and landscaping; and improvements to the ditches and culverts on the access road. Buildings to be renovated include the staff house, lodge, dining hall, canteen, and 34 cabins, along with installation of kitchen equipment for the dining hall and bunk beds for the cabins. Utility upgrades include electrical stub outs and to 100 amps.



Camp Lapihio Group Camp-  
Arts and craft building

# 12. Maple Hill Lodge Group Use Area

This project proposes general repairs and improvements that would stabilize the Maple Hill Group Camp and allow it to continue being used as a destination for organized groups. Scope of work includes: improving the gravel parking area; a handicap walkway and ramp; and 500 feet of 18' wide paved maintenance access road leading to the lodge and install underground 100-amp electric service to the structure. Damage to the structures from powder post beetle infestations will be addressed, and the structures will be treated to prevent future beetle damage. The work in this project is intended to provide revenue generation and protect the valuable historical resources and character of the Great Depression-era buildings, built in 1939, while meeting current code requirements.

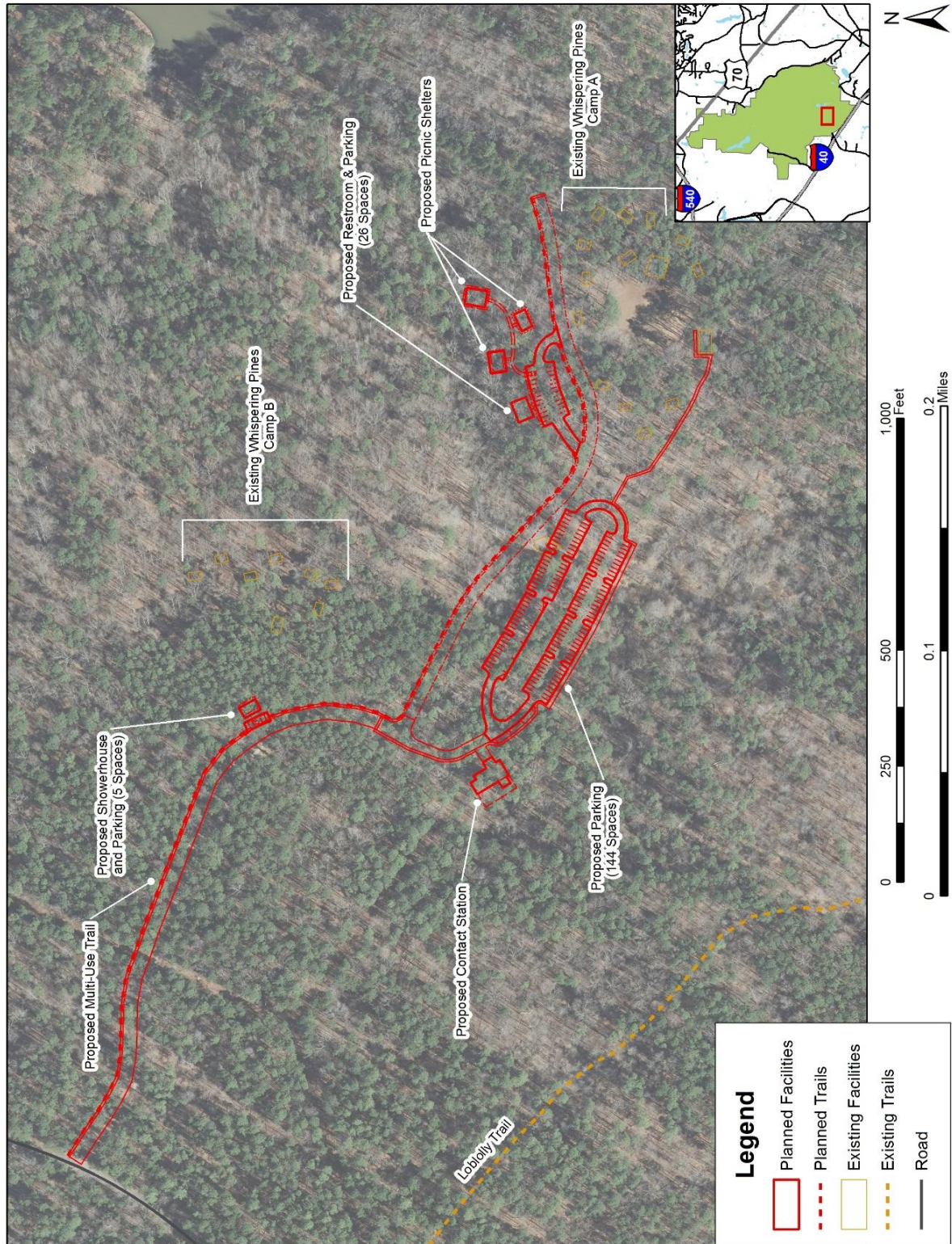


Maple Hill Lodge





## PROJECT #1: CONTACT STATION / EDUCATION BUILDING





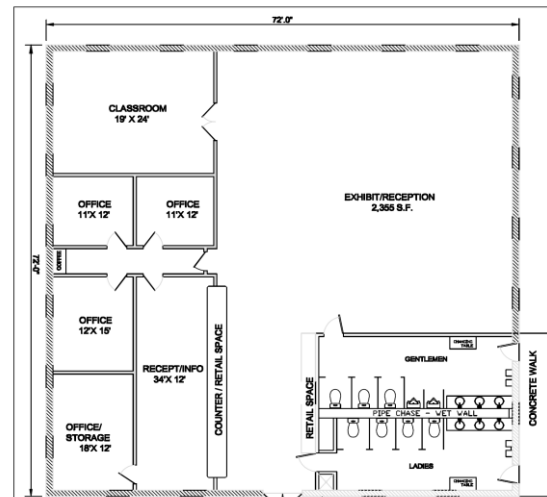
## PROJECT # 1: CONTACT STATION /EDUCATION BUILDING



**Cleared, flat area for proposed parking lot**



**Reedy Creek Environmental Education  
at Whispering Pines**



**Conceptual Building Footprint**

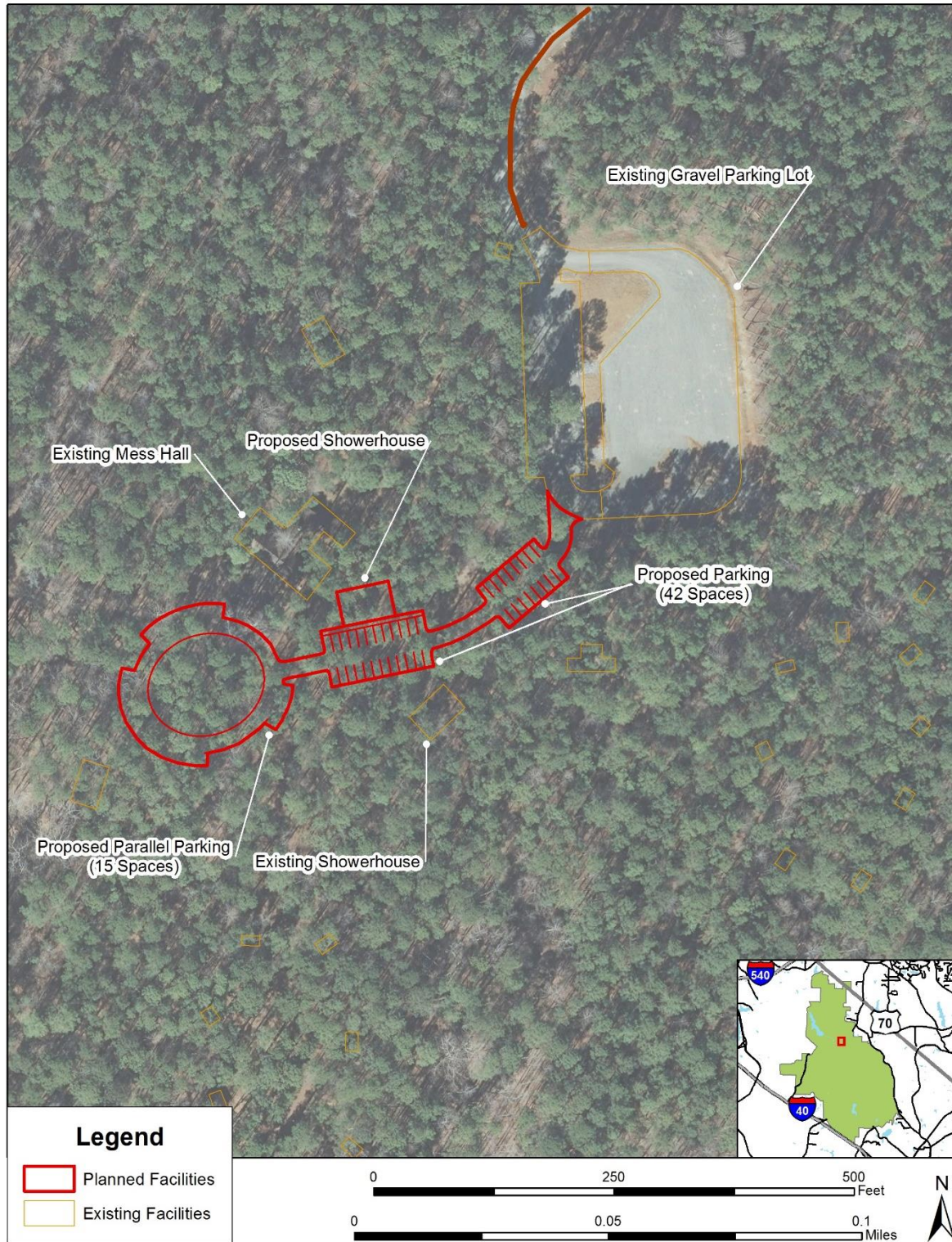


**CCC Cabin preserved for interpretation and  
educational purposes**



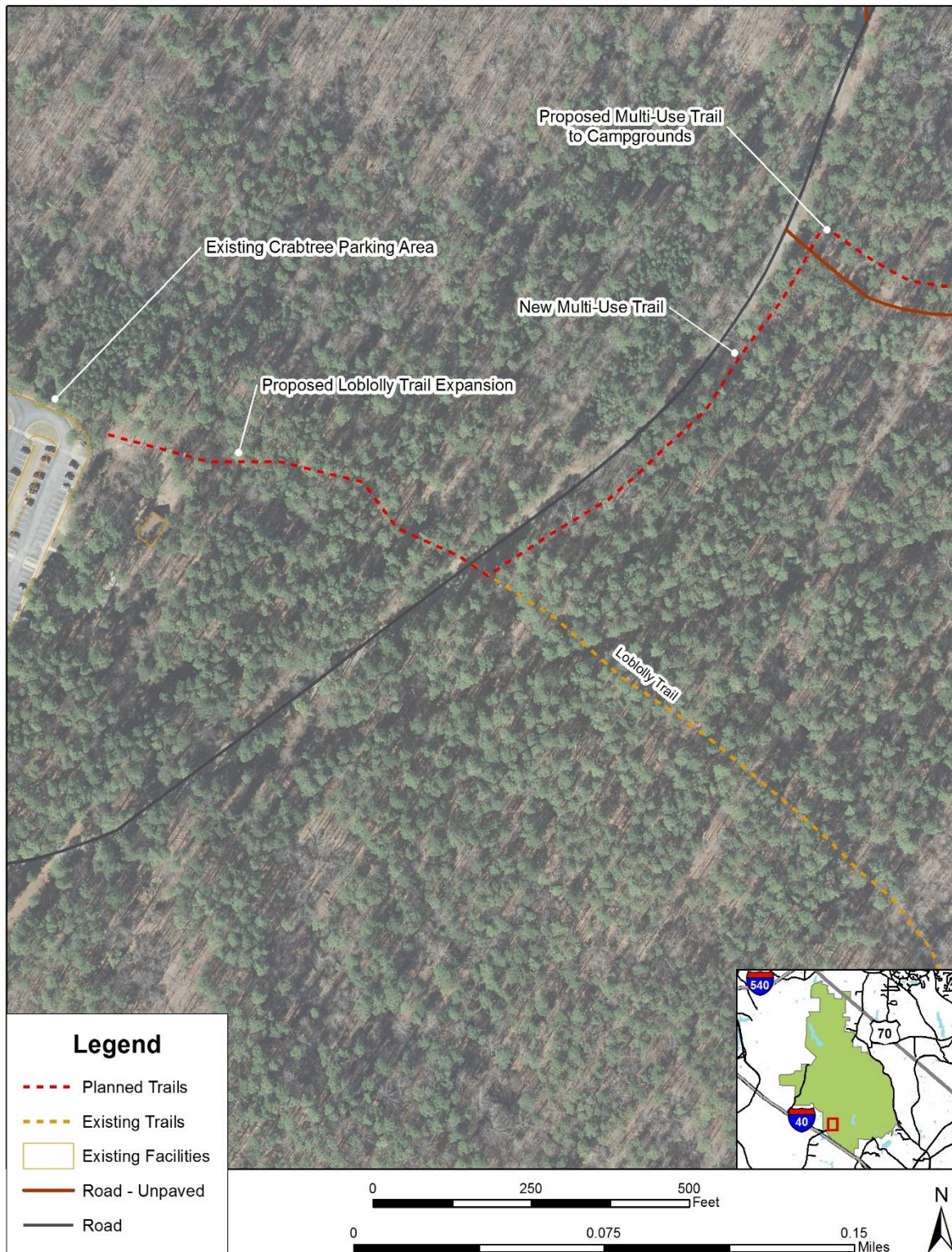


PROJECT #2: CONVERT SYCAMORE GROUP CAMP TO DAY USE AREA





# PROJECT # 3: MULTI USE TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS





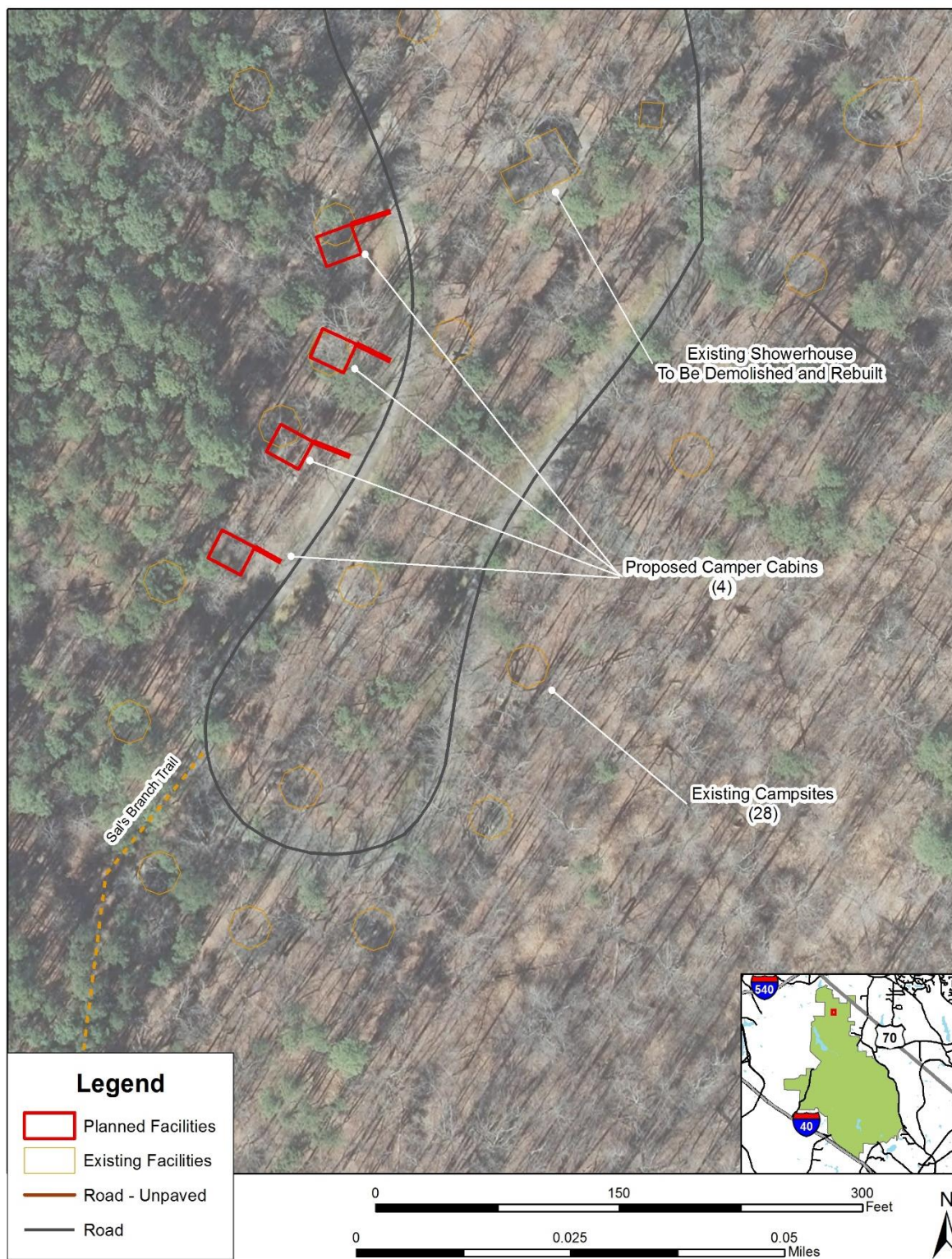


## PROJECT #4: CRABTREE CREEK MAINTENANCE AREA IMPROVEMENTS





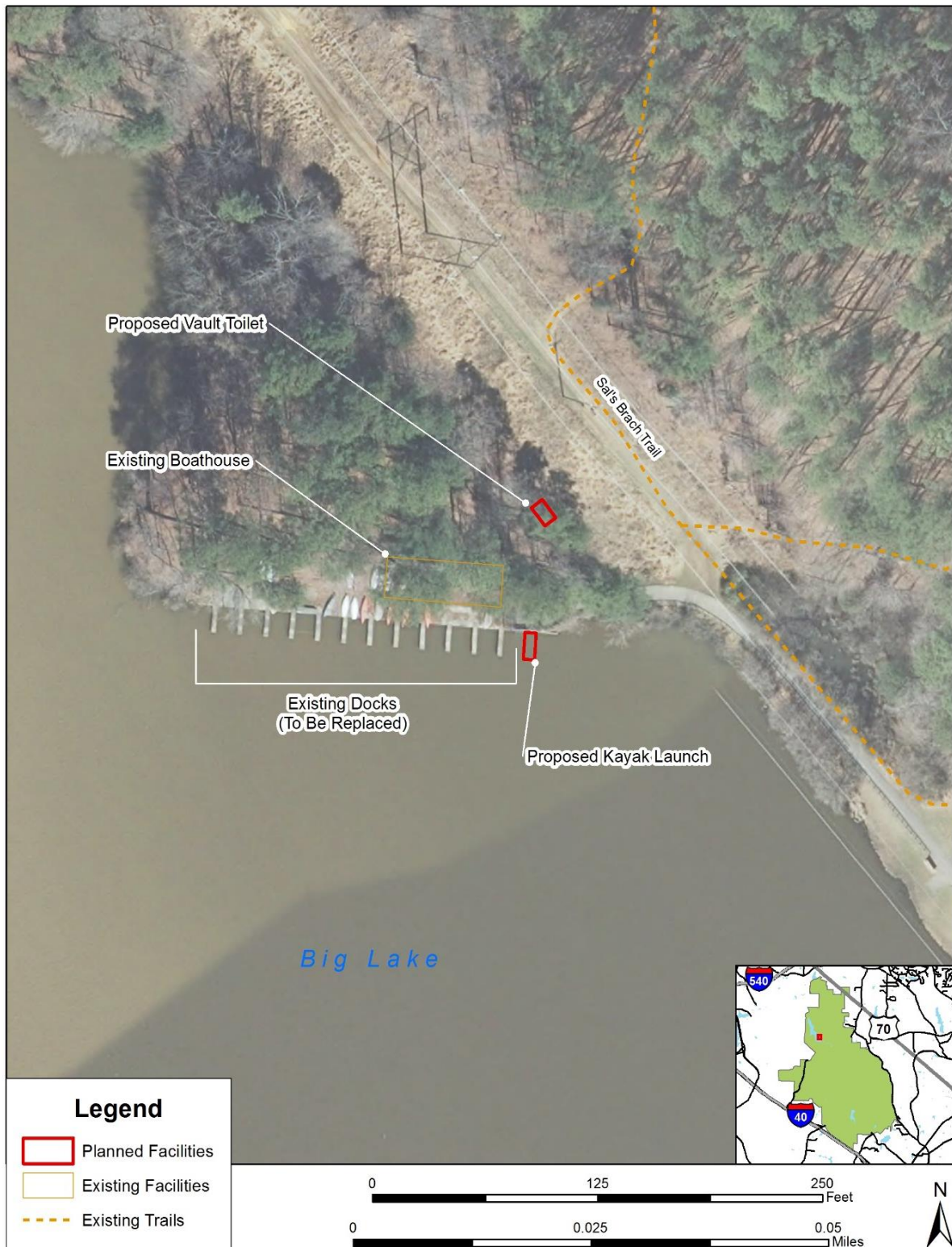
## PROJECT # 6: TENT AND TRAILER CAMPGROUND IMPROVEMENTS





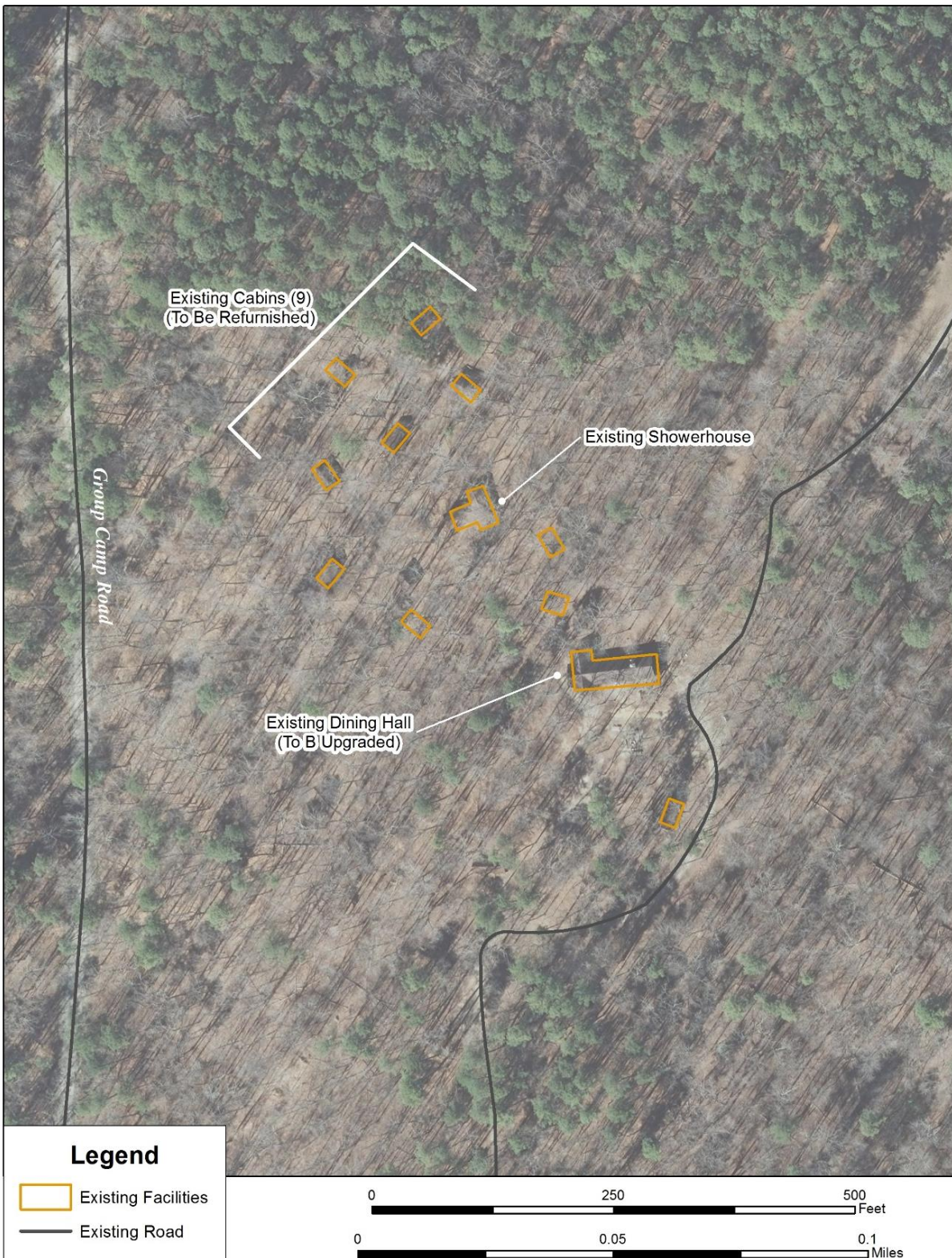


## PROJECT #7 BOAT HOUSE RENOVATIONS





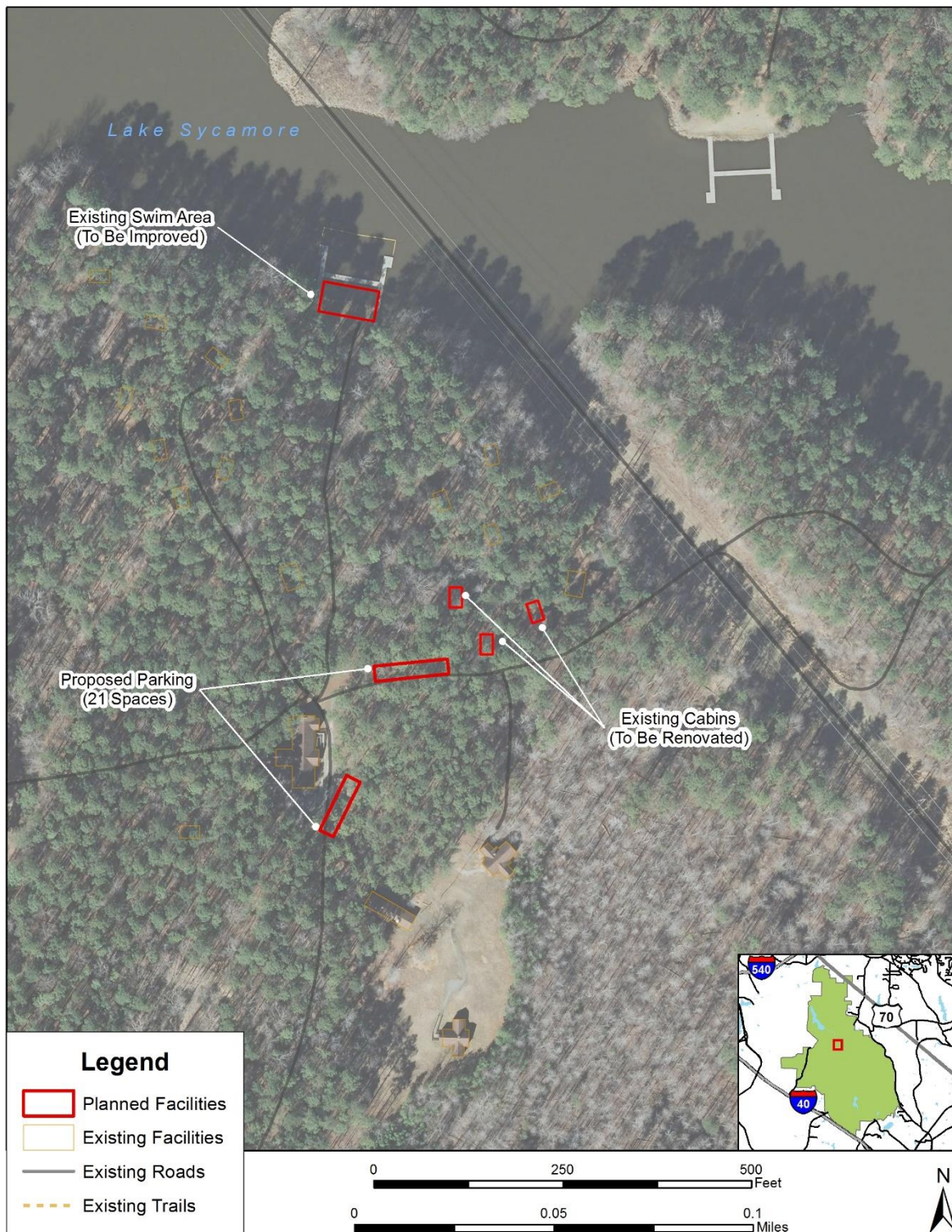
## PROJECT # 8: GROUP CAMP RENOVATION – CRABTREE





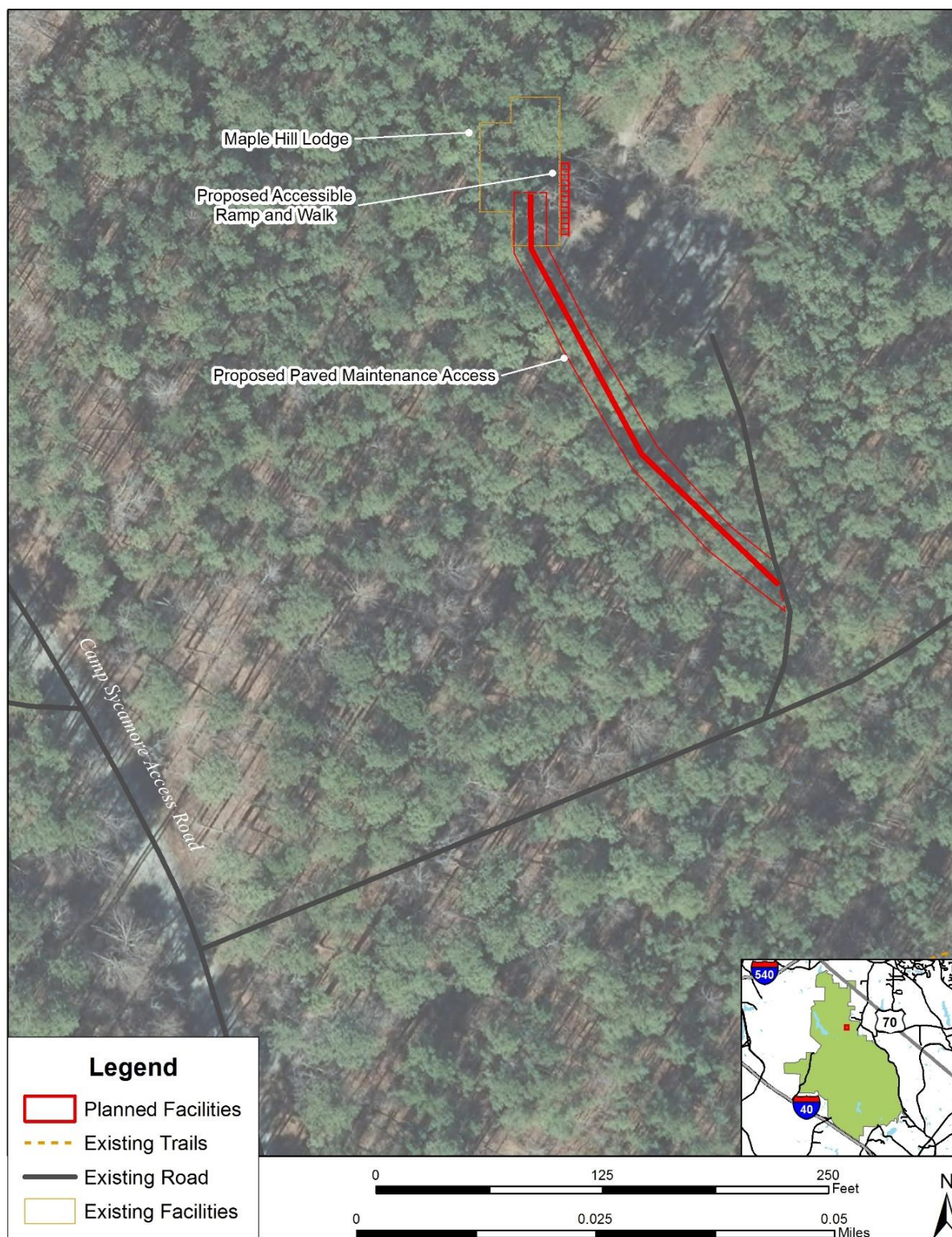


## PROJECT #11: RENOVATE LAPIHIO GROUP CAMP





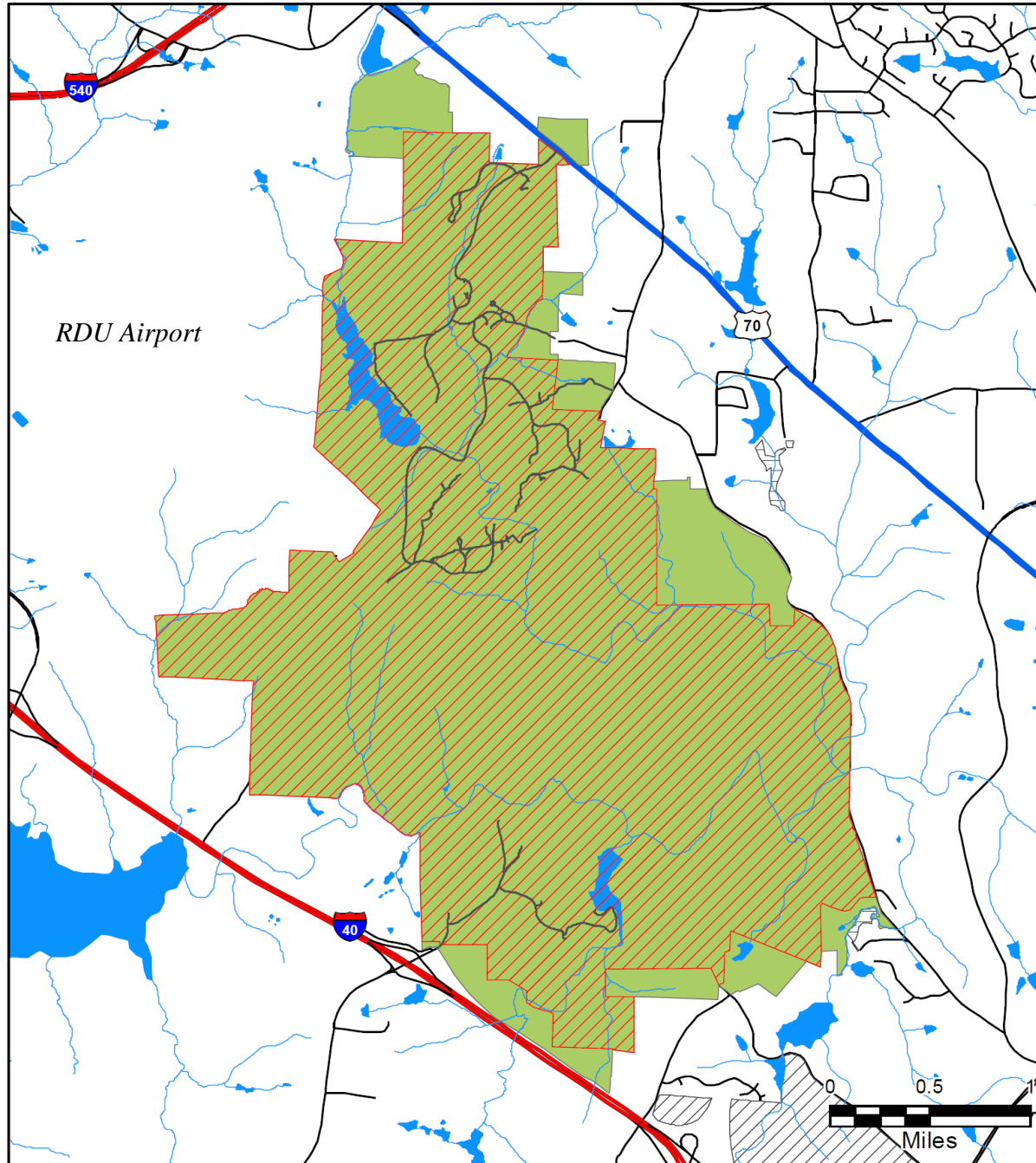
## PROJECT #12: MAPLE HILL LODGE GROUP USE AREA









## HISTORICAL OVERLAY DISTRICT (FOR REFERENCE)






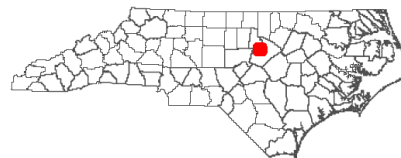
### William B. Umstead SP



Jan 2016

-  Crabtree Creek  
Recreational  
Demonstration Area
-  State Parks Unit

- Other  
Conservati...  
Land**
-  Federal
-  State
-  Other



## PARK MAP

